

M 1500
Wednesday, December 18, 1968
San Francisco
Group III

Mr. Nyland: So, I can say “back again.” But, it wasn’t so long ago that I was here. In the meantime you have kept Groups III going... [Aside: Can you sit down?] I have listened to several of your tapes and once I made a remark about it, that I thought that the Group III—the purpose—was a little bit misunderstood. And perhaps with a good reason; because it’s very difficult when you start out and you say “Here is a group of people who like to know something about Gurdjieff,” they have a meeting and then at such a meeting you cannot talk very much about Gurdjieff. That is a little strange, of course. At the same time, there is a long period that is necessary to become acquainted with the ideas as they are, and there is really a time of preparation before one is really willing to do something about it. You have to go through a long period of finding out that you really want it, and that depends on where you, at the present time, live. So the character of a Group of this kind, which we call every once in a while an ‘open’ meeting because it’s really open to everyone who wants to come and who is serious enough to talk about life as a whole, and to look at life from the standpoint of a more spiritual value, or perhaps even a little bit of esoteric knowledge.

But I don’t want to go into detail about how to Work. Because for those who like to know about that, or perhaps who have read certain things about it, may be already a little over-anxious and they may not know what is involved. I say it’s quite necessary to have a certain period of preparation for yourself, so that you become more and more convinced that there is actually something in this direction of Objectivity. And you are, of course, interested in so many different things. And it is quite logical that you start to compare it ... and even sometimes you might hear different people talk about Gurdjieff, and maybe it’s a little confusing if on your own you try to compare certain things that you have been interested in through reading or through

hearing someone talk about it, that you actually do not know what to think about these ideas or where to place them. So, I think that is still the character of what we should have on an evening like tonight.

If you have questions about how to live; the reason why you think that your life is worth something, or that you believe that in living you have certain questions: why you really want to continue with it in that way, or should you change. Or, what can give you a certain perspective in your life, what really could be a motivation for the continuation, even in professional work or even in relationships you might have. Or even in certain ideas regarding religion or philosophies or whatever your interests happen to be, are they right or wrong; should you continue to spend time on them, or are they not worthwhile. And if they are not worthwhile, what is really worthwhile from the standpoint of a Man living on Earth or living in this society, or living here, or having travelled, maybe, or having read a great deal of certain literature that appealed to him or her?

In general, what kind of questions do come up when you are by yourself and you start to consider your life as you are living it now and as you have lived it, and why have you done certain things that at the present time you might even criticize. Why is that you have done things that perhaps you are now sorry about and that you honestly couldn't help, and why is it that you are brought up as one is and with an interest in certain directions as given by education or by good friends or by your father and mother. Or, what it is that at a certain time in one's life, that one has to consider these questions of how will I continue and what is really an aim that I build up for myself, particularly when I'm young, and I say, "Well, here is the whole world ahead of me, and I want to make something of myself." And then you are in front of that kind of a question, in what direction do I now want to go and what kind of a Man can I be, or can I even be expected to become.

Because there are of course a variety of different ways of trying to find out. You can be interested in astrology and you can study your chart. You can be interested in Tarot and lay the cards. You may be interested in numerology. You may be interested in I Ching. You may be interested in finding out through extrasensory perceptions, or clairvoyance, or clairsaudience. A variety of different possibilities apparently are open. You can follow in the line in which you may have been taught—that you should be religious, very much to the left or very much to the right—it doesn't matter so much, there has to be a tendency in a person that he is considering

this life not entirely giving him answers to what he really would like to have an answer. But it's quite possible that in trying to find such answers, that either you are ready to give up or that it is too difficult, or that too much is required—you cannot do it because it takes away from the time which you should spend in another direction in order to earn money or where you have obligations—or where it is sometimes that you say, “It is too much because I’m really lazy and I’m not interested.”

And whenever these questions come up; and we simply say that a person is interested in a spiritual development, or a relationship of himself towards that what is really his inner life, or that what he religiously would call a relationship towards a ‘higher’ form of Being, or what to think of the universe, or why is really life existing on Earth. Why is it that human beings still have war with each other, and why are they selfish? Why are they protecting themselves? Why are they sometimes mean? How does it come that not everybody can follow the Golden Rule? What is it that we learn that seems to be right and that we forget? And how is it really that we are psychologically constituted so that we are unable to fulfill certain things that even in ... with the best of intentions we start out with, and tomorrow morning I have practically forgotten it, or at least I don’t have the desire anymore the way it was.

So that even if I do know certain instances and experiences of myself which are very much worthwhile; and that actually at a certain time when I come to myself and I sit or think or meditate, or I realize certain things about myself, or perhaps even that at times I feel that I am in contact with something else, or I’m influenced by art in some form or that I even produce art, that I have read a great deal of philosophy and ideas of certain people have appealed to me, and that even at times that I say this was really most beautiful because I’m in front of some scenery in nature and it takes my breath away—why doesn’t it stay. Because at such a time I’m touched and I know that at such a time I make a promise to myself. Depending a little bit of how deep I am—that is, how deep my life will go—I almost wish to talk to that what is really more essential of myself and I would like to make a promise to myself that, in the presence of that kind of beginning of a Conscience that I will undertake a certain task, or even if I am very much affected that I will swear and I will vow that *that* is what I am going to do. And there is no question at that time about my honesty, because really at times I know that I can be extremely sincere; and it may not be in the form of a prayer, but it can definitely be in the form of such silence that then I hear and that I say, “This I know is right, because I feel it.” It is right. I may not be able to

define it and perhaps sometimes I don't even wish to find any words for it because many times these kind of feelings cannot be expressed ... I don't want to express them, but still my life in some way or other comes to the foreground and then I recognize it as worthwhile and then I say, "It ought to be there tomorrow."

I make up my mind in regard to, let's say, a certain person. I say, "Then I will tell this and I will tell that," and I know that whatever I will tell is honest and sincere. And then when I am confronted with that person, at that moment something happens—maybe a little remark, perhaps a little criticism, or perhaps a little awkwardness—and all my good intentions are gone and I stammer because I cannot find the proper words anymore. And I do remember that they were very good when I was by myself, and then when I am in that kind of a situation, where is it and why is it that I cannot find such words.

You see, we must divide a little bit about what is ordinary life for us—that is, what is in general and what we see—and to what extent we recognize ... in the world and in the behavior of other people, that you recognize ourselves and to what extent do we feel at home with what kind of people. And when I look at myself and I see how, fortunately when I'm healthy and I have energy and I read and I think and I spend my time I say 'usefully,' or sometimes that I have to spend it because I have to earn a living, or sometimes I don't even want to do that and I borrow or sponge on someone; and I say then, in my good moments, that it 'isn't right' that I live off something that I don't deserve—that I have not worked for—and that it is for me then a question of dishonesty, sometimes taking and taking without giving anything in return, and I know that I say to myself "What is this Conscience of mine," it isn't worth very much because at times when the Sun shines I say "Thank God that the Sun shines," but when it rains I will tell Him that I want sunshine, and who am I as a human being.

You see, we have to distinguish between different forms of life in the first place. And it is simple—you might say plants and animals and human beings—but it's not so simple when you come to divisions among human beings and how they spend their life. And, leaving alone if life exists somewhere else—on other planets or different parts of the universe—or even if life existed before I was born or that it might continue to exist ... because we really do not know very much about it, and the question sometimes can bother one so that you say, "I want to find out for sure what is right."

If I have a belief that there is a possibility of a higher form of consciousness, I want to get

it; sometimes I will say at ‘any kind of a cost,’ and sometimes I know that in saying that I’m terribly foolish, because I do not know the cost and I don’t know the harm that sometimes may be involved in trying to find out certain things. How do I know that I might burn my fingers. By experience, and then maybe it is too late. You see, it is a simple problem. It would be extremely useful to try to find out if I could continue to live without breathing, but I know well enough that if I don’t breathe or if somehow or other I prevent myself from breathing, or I live in an atmosphere of carbon monoxide, that there is some harm done to me and then at a certain time maybe I have to give up.

This question of surface of where we live—where we spend our time and energy, with whom we associate, what color we take on of the surrounding—what is it that stimulates me, and to what extent am I willing to pay, in the form of energy, overcoming laziness. To what extent can I be affected by other people who stimulate me so that I say I want to imitate them and it doesn’t matter anymore how much it now will cost because I know ... I’m so convinced that I want to study piano because I hear someone play and say “I wished I could do it that way” and I believe I can and I start, and months and months go by and all I can produce is a little Mozart.

After all, this whole question of how deep does my life actually extend; is it as thin as my skin; the question of how much superficiality do I allow, how much do I actually want to find out if there is any deeper life, and if I do find it what will I do with it. And therefore the divisions of life among Mankind—that is, depending on now the reason why they happen to live in a certain section of the world and are affected by different influences than we are—and why we are the way we are; and are they as life—as forms of life—better than we are? And what is the measure that I should apply to that kind of a living form. What is it that I say what is ‘good’ for me—something that satisfies me, or that what keeps me out of the arms of the law, or that what is acknowledged by my friends and for which I don’t have to fight.

How brave I am to stand up for my own opinion and what is it, again and again I come to that point: What is it that I really want and what do I expect, and what can I actually expect of myself. That is, how much is my hope and how much will be the actuality of my life. Do I see enough of dangers that are in the way, and am I attracted by the dangerous attitudes of other people. I say I know that fire destroys, and still I also know that sometimes fire attracts me; because I love to have a little adventure, and I will go out to it because it is unknown and I will rationalize and say I want to ‘investigate.’

And what do I do when I investigate, and where do I stop—at what safe point. I say I want to try a variety of different things and I want to submit to certain conditions—do I know what is involved. Do I think that I know the influence of other people on me. Do I know that when they do influence me that there is perhaps a point where I should give up, and I continue. What is really the difficulty in Man when he has a mind which tells him one thing and a feeling which tells something else, and what will he then follow. And then if he has to do something, his body will also tell him “Yes” or “No” in accordance with the state of health and the state of laziness.

You see, these kind of problems I think every thinking Man has to consider. Because they apply to ordinary life in the first place; and whatever it is now that I describe as what is the kind of a Man on Earth and what he should be, quite logically depends a great deal on where he was brought up and what his surroundings were, and that in the midst of this what I now call ‘my’ generation in which I happen to live and that that what is the past generation where I came from when I was young and that that among them—including father and mother and all the rest of the good family—living a certain form of conservatism which I don’t like because I wish to be free, and I rebel.

And what do I rebel against. Because I don’t even know where I came from because I didn’t live that way and I never took in anything of that kind, than only in opposition. My knowledge is of course extremely limited and we are, all of us without any question, provincial. Why do we say when a Man of the world knows how to behave that he can adapt himself to a variety of conditions, and why is he ... when he really wants to be that way, why is it so difficult for him even to distinguish himself from the rest. Why is it that people are much more at ease when they buy the same kind of a thing and have to live like the Joneses—and buy at the five-and-ten-cent store because that seems to be the only way to avoid criticism. And then when I rebel against such conditions, which direction do I go. All I know, I go away from what I don’t like; and my desire for a change is based that I don’t like what I experience, and I don’t have enough knowledge to know in what direction to go. Because if I follow the opinion of a variety of different people, all I can go by is what they represent; and if that appeals to me then I will say, “I wished I could become like so-and-so,” and I try, and I must ... of course I must give up because the other person lives that way and I cannot because I am different.

And, what is there in me that I know potentially is possible for me to develop, and how will I develop it and what will be the reality of such development, ultimately. Because I cannot

foresee the influence of different experiences on myself, and psychologically I cannot draw a chart of how I will be ten or twenty years from now. Of course I take a horoscope and I say, “Yes, that is my Moon in a certain place and this is my rising sign,” but what is it that really determines what I can do. Because I may have tendencies and I say, “Mercury in my head, it happens to be like that and when it is Aries it is a little different,” but again and again, what kind of combinations of that kind of knowledge, drawn from a variety of different things, can give me at a certain time in the morning a definite desire that I wish to get up and I want to do the things that I don’t want to do, and that I can do them because I know there is an aim.

The purpose in Man’s life is to have an aim for himself—for a day and for a week and for a month and for a year, and for the rest of his life. And then one questions that, because: Why this aim in this life. Why should I live like a good Man. What is needed for me, to believe that I should be kind all the time, or that I should pay my taxes with a smile on my face when I’m full of criticism about how things are being run. And that of course I always, particularly when I’m younger that I think I know much much better than those people who are now carrying on and to whom I’m subject, and I dislike them. And I know it is wrong to dislike them because my mind says “Don’t be a fool, because if you fly off the handle you will lose your job and then you have to hunt for a new one.” And your feelings says “But I know, I can’t stand it any longer,” and one good day I simply say, “Goodbye,” and then I’m in a fix, really.

How often, if you look at yourself at the end of the day, that you are satisfied with having spent your day in the right way. How many times talking out of embarrassment just because it was expected of you. How often are you using ordinary clichés of politeness. Why is it that you pay attention to someone and listen to their opinions when you yourself should know what is right for you. And how can they ever tell you what is right for you; because they don’t know you, and that what you know of yourself you don’t talk about because it is too private and you don’t dare and that would embarrass you. Why do you cover up certain things that you know that were wrong but unfortunately happened to be seen by someone else, and why do you rationalize. Why do you want to appear better than you are. What is it in a Man that makes him dishonest, and why does he lie. Because he has fear, that he doesn’t dare to face the consequences of an act of himself? Why does he hide. How could a Man be if he actually could be the way he wished to be.

You can blame civilizations and culture, influences and so forth, and you can say “I am a

child of these circumstances and there is nothing I can do about it,” simply the same as when your horoscope indicates that there is a Saturn in a certain section you say “Well, that happens to be my nature.” And for that I say, a person who believes it, let them believe it and let them simply function in that sense and take whatever Mother Nature will give them—and try to eat or work it away and see whatever they can do with it—and see if they finally can still the different questions in themselves so that they don’t bother them anymore. Because after some time of a little experience in life, you can make adjustments. And even if you do ... I have to go to an office day after day, or perhaps live in the country and have to commute and you hate it, you will always say “Well, when I’m sixty or sixty-five, I can always retire provided I can have a little money invested.” And then I can have a little house in the country and then I can sit there for the rest of my life.

And then what and what for, and what is this life, then, for oneself. To extract from it all you can get, and to walk over other people and to have a certain kindness when you feel like it and not when you don’t feel it anymore? When you do not wish to have any respect for your father and mother because they in their innocence made you do certain things that you now blame them for? Is your attitude towards your friends correct. To what extent are you entitled to have friends.

These are questions of ordinary life, and you will not solve them on the surface of your life. Because there is a multiplicity of these kind of influences which are too many even to digest, let alone valuate, and that then if you are really sufficiently alive you will remain confused; because it will be extremely difficult to interpret the experiences you now have in the proper light because a year from now you will probably think differently, and in any event whenever you start to think about anything you will always forget something that becomes apparent the next day.

Why is it that we don’t know the truth about ourselves, even if we want to know it. And even if we did every once in a while glimpse a little bit of the truth, why can’t we stand it. Why do we object to people who are critical. Because we think we are still not that critical or ... that we are not as yet in that kind of a category that someone ought to be critical about us, because we’re apt to think in our vanity that of course we know a great deal—and that we can do this and that if we wish; so that we don’t steal, and only because you never have been in a situation of having to steal in order to continue the life of your child.

Such things, one can say I will solve them ethically and I hope then that gradually out of the experiences of life I will derive more than enough data which at a certain time will come in handy and that then I will know what to do. And of course you know well enough the more you learn and the more you come in contact with the opinions of others, the less you will find out for yourself and the less you will know what to do—unless you happen to be a person who doesn't mind the others, and then you become for yourself quite monotonous.

How can one, in the midst of life among other people, retain that what really makes one Be as a Man. Or how can one ... in finding that what is a motivation for myself in my life, how can I develop it; and if I do develop it, how will I know that it will be the same ten years, or towards the end of my life. How can I discover absolute truth for myself. The question is: Is it given to Man ... actually as he lives on Earth, is it really possible for him to find out what is Consciousness. Because it is quite idiotic if I say that people are unconscious on Earth, that then naturally I would have the question how do I reach Consciousness then, and am I as a Man entitled to that kind of a knowledge. Because the fact remains that we were born here, and I first have to settle the answer, or get the answer to, that problem: Why am I on Earth. And you can leave because that ... I think it may not be easy, but at least it would deliver you from all such questions—at least that is what one assumes—but again, the knowledge is not so firm and I don't know if I will run away from my Karma in that sense, and so I continue and I make adjustments, and where is the guide for my life.

You see, when we talk about such questions we touch really on a little different kind and apart of one's life as it is now. We really don't touch upon that what is more or less material and the satisfaction for one's physical body. One is really interested in that what makes a person alive, and the question of his aliveness is not dependent on the matter which represents him. Or rather, when I say it is not 'dependent' it is not the same; because I cannot assume that life in me is matter, because I know when a person dies there is no life and the matter is still there. So there must be something that I call 'life,' and with what can I now associate it and to what extent can I find out what it really is ... because I can say that if I continue to make forms of matter and if I just continue to refine it, that then gradually out of that life will start to exist.

Of course this is the problem of the origin of life—biologically, scientifically possible to create such conditions that all of a sudden life will appear—and so far I know it has not been done. And so far, even if I believe in theories of Laplace or Kant or any one of those who have

ideas about cosmology; of starting with something as a force existing, or trying to think about the possibilities of what is really infinity for me when that what I'm associating with and what is really paramount for me is definitely finite; that even when I read about symbols and I study Jung and I say there is a difference between animus and anima, a difference between spirit and matter, a difference between Soul and a body, a difference between outer life and inner life, a difference between that what are manifestations to the rest of the world and my essential essence, a difference between that what is light and that what is dark; and to try to understand the distinction and I say then that what is positive must have a negativity otherwise it could not be positive.

But where is the Oneness which will not allow for any opposites. Where is it in my life that I know that there is something that can exist by itself without being dependent on the opposite. If I say I'm joyful, I also know when I'm sad; and the contradictions—you might say the opposites—of that what exists and in general good and evil, kind and unkind, agreeable and disagreeable, high or low, left or right, above, below—whatever it may be, I always live by such opposites and I try to understand them as having, regarding the two forces, a result always dependent on who is the strongest and that that force, of course, then will win and I will become subject to that kind of a force. I say if I have outer life—that what is to the outside world manifested that is the form of my behavior—and then I say, “Yes, but there must be something that is deeper.” And I go deeper and I say it is more ‘essential’ when I have certain thoughts or ideas about the universe or philosophies; or really what I say regarding other people, that I say I care for them and I really care very ‘deeply’ and I care from the ‘bottom’ of my heart; and that what I want to investigate in science and I say I'm not interested in just a few facts which I collect but I want to know why it is that certain things react on each other and what is it that is attraction and a force—chemical or not, or mechanical—or whatever it is that happens in the world of which we, as grown-up human beings are of course the result and what has made us what we are, and what is there of us with which we can work.

These are the problems of one's inner life. These are, more and more, problems of the real essential values of oneself, and the closer I can come to that, the more I will discover that life really is of more value, the more I can go to that inner silence within myself: When in my private life I don't even want to use words to pray to God, but that what is needed for me is simply a sigh to indicate that I happen to be alive and I would like to find Him. One cannot live in life

without becoming, I simply call it, 'religious.' One can use terminology of your own. You don't have to go to the Bible and copy it; whatever it is in yourself that you consider of value within yourself and that is for you the highest, or perhaps the deepest that can become a guide for you.

But to what extent ... again and again you have to ask this question: How reliable is it. How often with the best of intentions have you done certain things out of the love for someone, and after some time you discover that really it was not right and it was not good enough, and you were incapable of actually loving in the way it should have been done. Whenever there is a limitation to Man—that is, whenever he discovers that he has come to the end and he cannot go further—it's obvious for him to know he has come to the end of the growing of his body and it doesn't grow further; and if it does a little bit and we have a man of over six or seven feet tall you say he is a 'giant,' but there are not many and they are freaks. When I take the average person—to which I, of course, belong—there is a limit to the growth of my physical body. And then I say if that is true—and it must be true because I stop growing—why is there an end also to the growing of my feelings. Why is there a limit to my mind. Why do I in dreams even hope for a possible expansion of my consciousness. Why is it that sometimes in such dreams there are combinations of certain facts which, from an ordinary standpoint seem quite unreasonable but definitely from the standpoint of dreams are truthful. Why can't I make everything that I wish to make. Why am I handicapped. Why are my fingers sometimes too thick and too heavy. Why am I, as a human being, only limited to that what is my own manifestation, and why is it so impossible to become someone else. And why is it that even in my thoughts I cannot understand someone else—unless perhaps there is an experience which I know for myself, and then to a certain extent I can sympathize.

Why is this limitation of the physical body, and why should I stop at the limitations of the rest of myself. Why should I assume that that what is my feelings have *not* stopped. Why should I think by the increased dexterity of my mind that my mind will actually become what it can be in all its potentialities. Do I honestly believe that I ... if I keep on exercising my mind that then my mind will become absolute? I must know that I'm limited in my feelings. I must know that others are more sensitive than I am and that certain ways ... in an emotional state I'm color-blind whereas others apparently can see. And that my mind has to stop at a certain point when it is filled with a lot of data and so-called 'facts'—and particularly the facts about myself and the rationalization processes that have taken place and all associative forms of thought—and that

then with that I try to go along in this world the best way I can.

But what is it that Man really wishes. His real aim would be to get away from this world in order not to be bothered any longer. And, how can he in his life grow wings. You see, in my imagination I can be free. In my dreams I can be free. And then I find out I have feet on the ground and I have to walk and I have to live. I still have to feed my body. It doesn't matter how much LSD you take, you still have to have ordinary food to keep alive. Don't think for a moment that it is so easy to substitute that what keeps a Man alive on Earth with all the different synthetic materials that we now call 'medicines.'

The poverty of our knowledge is so apparent, that we don't know any more what is the simple form of life. And our complications because of the industrial development is staggering, so that we only can live with little bits of push-buttons. The dignity of Man when he lives on Earth, or when he has to till the soil and he has to grow his food and he has to live very simple and just perhaps has heat because he chops the wood ... but again, what will he do it with: an axe which is manufactured by some factory somewhere with a person or a grinding wheel, or steel that was tempered in a certain way. His dependence on the rest of the civilization, it is very lovely to say that I don't eat any meat and I don't want to use anything that has belonged to an animal, but do the buttons or the leather of my shoes come only from animals who have died a natural death. Such things are so illogical and so stupid. I find myself in this life completely dependent on the conditions in which I have been brought up, and I remain dependent on anyone else around me; and even when I know that I can touch them, I do not know how much their atmosphere influences me when I am in their presence and what I do on Earth and how I live on Earth, and how the conditions created on Earth make me now belonging to this Earth and binds me to this Earth, because I have no way of growing wings and fly.

These are, I think, much deeper problems, and they are not settled by throwing an I Ching that easily. They are not settled by going to a psychoanalyst either, and raking over your past and finding a couple of words which seem to fit and other words which do not fit, but you try because you are so honestly sincere about finding out what is a mental disturbance. To return to simplicity for a Man in the midst of where he is growing up, cannot be done. If he wants to go to an uninhabited island he may have a chance, but he is absolutely unequipped to live there. When a Man wishes to fly to the Moon, or even Venus or any of the planets, how equipped is he to meet such conditions. And, what is the planetary world and what is the Moon, and what is there

in Man that can be compared to any of these planets as states of feeling or states of emotion, and to what extent can I understand—if I wish to live there and go there to develop—that what belongs to where I wish to go. If I want to go to Asia I can at least get a map, and then even when I fly there I can find out what it is to live because it is, you might say, ‘common ground.’ But when it comes to the possibility of a development of what I call my life of a ‘spiritual’ kind—or a feeling kind, or perhaps even artistic or whatever it is as creation—many times I come to the point that I know that someone doesn’t understand me, pretty soon the rest of the world cannot understand me because I am unique in my own world; and then, in believing that I do not remain a part of this world, and then I try to withdraw in an ivory tower. And again and again I remain dependent on the food I eat and the air I have to breathe in, and that what I see or what I experience with my sense organs. A Man is not alone. A Man is, even if he would like to believe that he is a little world all by itself, is not dependent on that little world by itself. And even if he lived in it, he doesn’t understand his own world.

Now, what is this for. To say simply that conditions as we know them on Earth are terrible and that it is extremely difficult to live in the surrounding in which we have been brought up, and that we can go on from now until doomsday criticizing all the conditions that have grown up—and one can even say through the fault of Mankind itself—as a result of whatever we call a quality or a characteristic trait of Man’s selfishness? What difference does it make. I can keep on fulminating and I can get very much upset and I can lose energy, and I can live constantly negatively about it and be morose and have a scowl on my face or become cynical; and what good will it do to me for my own development when I lose constantly all energies in such directions, of course, where I cannot do anything about it, than perhaps only in my immediate surrounding where there is perhaps a possibility of an influence. And then I face that—and I say with my wife, with my children, with my friends, with those I love, with those I live with—and then, am I honest to believe that I know what to do for them and how to be for them, and how not to influence them adversely. Who can. Who can dare to say then that they know. And then one says, “We’re all human” and quite right—we are—but what to do with this kind of humanity.

Because that is the problem of a Man: If he doesn’t want to face the problem he can simply accept the conditions of life as they are and—as I said before—make the best of it, but a Man when he is a Man is not satisfied with that because he is not going to submit. There is something of a spark in him that will make him wish to continue and to solve the problem—whatever

problems there are—until he dies and perhaps, then, he can say the problem is solved for me. Because I have nothing to do with my death—unless you commit suicide ... and all during that particular period this kind of searching in one's life for the solution of certain problems, this is a requirement for anyone who is interested in the ideas of Gurdjieff.

And, let there be no mistake about that. Because if you're not interested in any of what I have now ... just now said, then Gurdjieff has nothing to say. Because Gurdjieff does talk about life as Man lives it, and what his particular opinion happens to be about an unconscious creature like ourselves and the statement that he has made describing conditions as they have happened on Earth—allegorically or in reality, or a description of that what is still taking place and what is our present civilization and what the fruits are and where it will go or what it will yield—and how Man is subject to such conditions and cannot extricate himself because he's blind or he is living under the influence, as Gurdjieff calls it, of an organ ... or the results of the consequences of an Organ Kundabuffer making him see things that are not truthful and see them upside down, or simply making him see that what is light as darkness and darkness as light.

A Man has not any form of discriminating between that what is right for him for his growth. He can tell of course a little bit about Earth, and he can know a little difference between that what is poisonous and that what is still useful; he also knows when he overeats that his stomach reacts and he knows that when he is angry that he loses energy, and there are lots of things that we call 'wisdom' which apply to Man when he has a little knowledge, and when it is the wisdom of his body we've made a little advance here and there, more or less to keep out of the hands of the doctor more or less. But in general in relations—in that what is now really important for a Man, of what he should believe in and what he believes as his capacity and what can become an actuality—when one says can a Man actually grow up to become 'balanced,' to have within himself some form of a scale like an equilibrium so that he can weigh things and find out what is right under the certain circumstances or conditions in which he happens to live, or what is it that Man should become even if one says Man is not at the present time what he should be, what is this kind of an ideal of a Man.

When Gurdjieff says 'harmonious' Man, what really does he mean. Because the harmony that I might consider harmonious may be cacophonical for you and reversely, and what is the rule. Simply say that the Well Temperierte Klavier of Bach is really the only kind of music? Of course, it isn't. When I say the decimal system is the only way to calculate, logically it isn't

mathematically. And there are such a variety of different ideas and hypotheses which of course a person must believe in because it is his own and he has to treat it like his child, so of course any kind of a criticism he will resent. What is it in Man that I can say, this is 'absolute' truth? There are very few things that I can be sure of. The fact of my birth I'm sure about and the fact of my death I also am sure about, although I haven't experienced it as yet. The fact that I have to keep on breathing otherwise I die—I'm also sure about that. The fact that I have to keep on eating and feed my body otherwise it will emaciate and I die—also that I know. But, what else. When I say I 'love' you, how do I know. "Forever and ever until death doth us doth us part"—what vows do I make and dare to make, and predict what my life is going to be. I promise I will love you 'forever and ever,' and ten years later what has happened.

But you see, those are just ordinary things, in ordinary relations on ordinary Earth, and they have as yet very little to do with what I am as a Man when I believe I am a Man who is here on Earth for a very definite purpose that I have to fulfill. And that I should have an aim in order to grow, and perhaps to grow out of this life—maybe, if it satisfies my logic to assume that it will continue in another form some other place. In some way or other it was created as a body, or perhaps I want a form of life which was mine if I can believe in reincarnation—of that what existed and now appears for a little while, and then when it dies it will continue with life again and again—because I say life if anything is Infinity and is eternity, and it never can die because death is only the absence of life.

So if I start to believe that something is really worthwhile in me, I have to find out what is this life in me that asks for a certain expression, and what is it that is now expressing it—my body in manifestations, and some thoughts and a few feelings—and all of that leaves me in a particular little bit of a surrounding which I call my 'world' and in which little world I will die ultimately if I don't do anything about it. Because this I know: That if I live in an unconscious state that gradually, because of the years and my experiences, the spiral of my life will become narrower and narrower, and it will gradually become less and less interested in that what now interests me. And that what I now depend on I will become less and less dependent on, and those that are friends now most likely will disappear and sometimes become enemies. And I will satisfy myself with the simplest form of interest, so that finally when I sit and I become a little senile and then I have a little grandson who can bring my slippers, I'll be tremendously happy to end my life in that way.

This is the picture of an unconscious Man, and it is not a Man who remains alive all his life. And that is the problem: longevity of Man; how to continue in his life even if the form becomes a little destroyed and decayed.

Where is it that I find this life. What is it that I should do in order to keep it going. What is it that I should do in order to protect it. I have to go to my inner existence. Because the outside surface I know wears off; after seven years it is completely renewed, I cannot count on it at all because it is so temporary. What is permanent in me. My essence, that what really makes me tick, that what really governs me? I will never find permanency permanently until I find that what is the center of my existence. Because I will never have any permanent form as long as I depend on dimensions in either time or space. When I finally can come to a point and when I in a point of time can come to a moment, then I will know by experience that I experience—and I say, now, I experience—Infinity in which there is no opposite.

The question that one has to face if one wishes to become Conscious, is a question of what is my subjectivity and what is it worth in the light of an Objective state. What is the value of my life in a subjective form, and how can I create a form belonging to Objective living still as life. Where is it that I find, within myself, Objectivity. What is it that I know when I think about the possibility; even when I haven't got it, that I know that the thought is already an indication of a possibility, otherwise I wouldn't think about it; even if I say I am 'subjective,' I imply that there is something else that is not subjective.

And for that reason this question of Work on oneself has only to do with an understanding, in the first place, what I am in reality without any doubt, without any doubt between my mind and my feeling so that I know it with the totality of myself—that what I actually am—and no one, not even God himself, can tell me different. Because if I actually know absolute truth, that for me is my God whichever way I wish to describe it. Because that is the form that I can understand. Because all the so-called ethereal, 'spiritual' beings, how do I know than only by a certain influence on me which has to be translated into the form which belongs to me on Earth, and that happens to be material of this kind. Because even magnetism and electronics and electricity and force and life-force vital points—all these things are concepts. I do not know enough about it and I cannot really expect that my brain, being subjective as it is all throughout, will ever understand the concept and an experience of Objectivity.

You see now why it is so necessary to go through a long period of trying to find out what

you really are. Because with that you have to Work. Because you're not going to buy it anywhere. You're not going to get it in church. It is not going to be given to you by Mother Nature. Mother Nature has done Her duty to produce you and to make you grow up to this extent—with a body that doesn't grow any further, with a mind that is just about sufficient to live on Earth and think a little bit, and with a feeling that is more or less satisfying to distinguish some kind of emotional states or ordinary feeling states of what we call 'love' and 'hate' but mostly 'jealousy' and 'vanity.' So, if I want to find out things I first have to start with the kind of material ... and the knowledge of the material I will have to find out things with. For that I need truthful statements about myself. Because if I start to build on sand, the rains will come and will wash my house away. If I want to build—that is, if for some reason or other I think that life in the form which is now familiar to me should continue to exist—I have to build something of certain form of materiality which can live, I say simply, in a 'spiritual' world, or at least in a world which is not material, which is not personalized like I am.

It does not mean that I will reach an absolute state. Many gradations and many steps are needed for that. Because it is not a process that will come overnight. For the process of understanding myself, I need a lifetime. For the process of developing that what is needed for the continuation of my life after the physical body dies, I will need a great deal of energy and an understanding of my emotional states and nature. For the development of that what could ultimately become free from this Earth and what I call a 'Soul,' I will need a great deal of intellectual understanding, and not knowledge.

For that what is for a Man in this world ... what is possible for him in his own little world—what is his aim for a Man to become harmonious—simply continues up to the point where his Soul could continue that what is now taking place in his physical body with all the different attributes of feelings and thoughts, but that what is needed for a Man when he finally reaches that state of a Soul-existence is then to be united with that what is the totality of all living, with Infinity, or to realize that there is only light and no darkness, or that His Endlessness in reality is endless and that the state which he wishes to call 'joy' becomes a state of bliss in which there is no opposite.

The aim of Man is first this kind of self-Consciousness and then after, as another layer closer to that what is Infinity as Sun Absolute, to become you might call it Cosmic ... 'Consciously Cosmic,' which is an entirely different kind of a process because Man then, at that

point of his Soul being reached, has to be re-born again into a point of existence beginning on the new level of development in a Cosmic sense.

But you see, all of this will lead to perspectives, to certain insights, to certain ways of finding out the depth of different experiences, and in particular to find out that what a Man is in his life only as life in all his cells, in that what is the center part of himself; and we call it *Magnetic Center* as that what is the one and only response which Man can hear, simply because his Magnetic Center is the representation of God in him which was given at the moment of conception and which will again leave and be free to be placed in other forms when his physical body dies. Unless such a Man knows how to hold on to that what his life as Magnetic Center and then has created for himself a Kesdjianian body—that is, an emotional body—which lives again for thousands of years but dies also, until Man becomes harmonious and then his life is represented in his Soul and then is free from Earth.

The reason I talk about these things is simply to give perspective in your own life and to take, out of the different facts which you experience in your daily existence, that what is really important and to let go gradually of the things that are superficial and where it is not worthwhile to spend your energy on. And to see to what extent that that what is in yourself as states partly emotional and partly as feeling—very little emotional, really, because emotions have to do with that what does not concern you primarily, whereas feelings have to do only with the satisfaction of your own existence, liking or not liking. So the question for a person is to see, as he gets up in the morning and as he lives his time during the day and as his time is eating him up, to what extent can he reverse the process and can he eat his time by living in a moment.

That is the big problem: First to see how much waste there is, to see how little one is, how small and at times how insignificant; and what the place is of Man on Earth in a relation to the rest of Mankind, and to see what is the Earth in relation to the solar system, and what is our puny little solar system in relation to all the constellations of the universe. What is the grandeur of Man. What is really within Man that makes him alive and then in his aliveness he dares to compare himself with the totality of all life, which he calls his God. And at times he dares to pray, to hope to be delivered from the bondage of Earth so that he then ... not enjoys his freedom, but actually answers to the purpose of his life in setting that what is life in him free to be able to be united to become One, really to understand and to return then, if he can, to Earth and to become, in life, Conscious in life on Earth, Conscientious, and having those two attributes of

himself, that then Man can be a Man who has a Will. So that such a Man as a definition of what a Man should become—that is, as harmonious—is a Man who can do, who can at any one time do that what he knows and understands and what he emotionally realizes is right, to do under the conditions as they are given at any one time, anywhere, and to know then what is right to be done for the furthering of the conditions for himself as well as for others, and is able to have the dexterity and the understanding and the actual wish to Be what he must be under such conditions. That Man is harmonious, but that Man has reached the possibility of Being, for himself in whatever he then does and whatever has been asked of him and whatever in the future may be presented to him as a task, that he then understands the Will of God and has submitted his Will toward that what comes from Above.

I say it's difficult to talk not in a religious sense; because religion is your philosophy of life, and if you really want to live you have to have guidance for that life with an aim. And that is simply the application of that philosophy in living in your manifestations—in that what you are, what you feel, what you think—what you expect, what you hope for, in what you have faith and what you are willing to die for; to what extent then you will be able to see whatever your life might give, that one is willing to die with the wish that one will continue to live.

It is not that easy and it is not that superficial, you understand now. It is not just a question to learn a little bit of how to Observe oneself and to see what Man ought to do and what he then ought to gather as information and then hopes that in that kind of an attempt he can really become Impartial, or that he can have an experience of a moment-existence in Infinity for a Man to reach the realization of truth in his intellect. You see it is fairly easy to talk *about* Work, but with what will you start, and what will really be the motivation of the wish to do something about yourself.

You only will want to do something when you know that you need it and that it is absolutely necessary to do something; and then you have a choice to select what you have to do to get out of the place where you are into a state which is, let's hope, more satisfactory or at least will give you more balance. But without the motivation, nothing happens. Without a wish, nothing happens. Without putting the wish into an actualization, nothing happens.

This is really the problem that faces one. Because I don't want to Work—not on myself. Whenever I remain lazy in not wanting to think through why I should even want to Work as a Man on Earth. And why I simply do not say, “Aw, let's just wait; tomorrow is another day and

if I don't find it by the end of my life, when I die God will be taking me in His arms because I am a little lamb and He is the shepherd." Don't ever be foolish about your own life and don't waste it, but really come to grips with it because it's worthwhile. And the reason why you should come to grips with it is because you have an obligation. And the reason you have an obligation is because you happen to be born; and you don't have to accept it and you will die, and when you can accept it you will also die but something else can remain alive. It is your choice wherever the accent is; if it is in this life to prepare for something and then in this life to profit by that what has been preparation, or simply to say 'laissez-faire'—it doesn't make any difference because I have no interest anymore in the way I live, I am through and I have done with all that I wish to do because from now on it is simply nothing else but repetition. That is too bad—such a state—because in such a state you're lower than an animal.

The seriousness of Work or the reason why one wishes, why there is a reason for that kind of a motivation is the realization of what I am. And about that there is no fooling and it is no joke, and it is that kind ... this kind of realization: Of knowing how stupid, how ignorant, how utterly unconscious, how completely mechanical, how automatic and how not having any Will whatsoever in our sense of the word and not even having any sense of what is becoming to a Man but simply to live because there happens to be a little example around the corner and you go and look at it and you admire it, and there you go—imitating.

I've no objection, as you know, to talk about Work. If you want to come to one of the Groups II, there is one here in San Francisco, there will ... there is in Berkeley of course, and Palo Alto. Come to such Groups. There you can talk about what to do if you are really honest, if you're really serious. Maybe it is necessary for more than a Group II here in San Francisco. Maybe there should be smaller groups so that you can talk to people who can tell you a little bit; because they will be the first to admit that they don't know very much, but more than enough for anyone who doesn't know anything at all. And don't be foolish. If you haven't heard about Gurdjieff but you think you know, you don't know anything. That is the honest truth.

So, maybe we meet next week, Wednesday again, this same kind of a Group? It's open for questions. This was only introductory. This was to give you a little ... a vision of something like a framework in which Work can be placed, where it belongs in our form of thinking and feeling, what it really ought to be and how you ought to look at it before you even, I would almost say, 'dare' to touch it; because for a person who is interested in his life and the maintenance, and to

find out how and to find out the reason why and what God has done to one and what it is as a picture or as an image or as a concept for oneself, that one really in fear and trembling should enter into this kind of an arrangement with Work. Because that what you wish to make is of the most value to you and ever will be ... and forever and ever will be, because it concerns your Soul, a Soul perhaps which can be made, or at least can be in embryo and can start to gestate; perhaps cannot as yet be born on Earth, but at least it can be conceived.

It is for that reason that I simply mention these things in a little bit different way than maybe you can get out of a book. Because it is important. It is much more important than you know. Even that statement you will question. And I wish you would consider what is really important to you. To the extent that it is important in its permanence, to that extent you will know that it is really the freedom from this Earth which will count in the end.

Goodnight.

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